

'Bookmark' saves work in progress

"Bookmark," a new \$69.95 program for IBM PCs and PC-compatible computers, does something very simple: every few minutes, it takes a "picture" of what's in the computer's memory and saves it on your hard disk. This picture, really a bit-by-bit copy in computer terms, acts as a bookmark — enabling you to return to that exact spot with ease.

Let's say you're in the middle of a very complex task when the lights in your building flicker due to a thunderstorm. Without the luxury of a backup battery to provide standby power to your computer, your current documents, spreadsheets or whatever else you were working on would be lost. You'd have to restart the computer, reload your programs and try to backtrack to where you were before. Hours of work might have to be reconstructed.

However, with Bookmark in-



Segal

stalled ahead of time, you would only lose a couple of minutes of work, if that. Bookmark only has to be installed once and then it will back up your files every two minutes — forever. When you restart your computer, the following message appears on the screen: "Resume? Y or N."

By touching the Y key for yes, the computer goes back to the exact place where you were when the last bookmark was placed. You can then proceed as if nothing had happened.

The wonderful feature of this program is its ability to intentionally place a bookmark in your work at quitting time, shut off your computer, and then pick up again at the exact spot when you resume work in the morning. When you install Bookmark on your computer, you can define a special key combination, such as Alt-S, to allow you to set the bookmark manually at any

time.

While I like the program and will recommend it to my clients, there are a few drawbacks:

- ✓ Bookmark only works with hard disk PCs that have enough room on the disks for the backup copies. If your computer has 512 kilobytes of memory, it needs 512K; if you have 640K, it needs 640K, etc., plus 256K for the video memory. That's an awful lot of overhead for a hard disk computer that might only have 10 megabytes of disk space to start with. Indeed, the publisher of Bookmark only recommends it for use with systems of 20 megabytes or greater.

- ✓ Expert installation is usually required. Although the manual is clear and easy to understand, I discovered that many things can go wrong during the installation process. Once set up, it works like a charm, but getting there isn't always easy.

- ✓ The program is copy protected, which is annoying. You can't easily install just one copy on several computers in your office,

which is a common need.

- ✓ Finally, especially since a separate copy needs to be purchased for each computer in your office, Bookmark's \$69.95 list price seems very high. Perhaps the price will fall when competitive programs are introduced, or when mail-order companies begin to offer it at a discount.

On the other hand, when you think about it rationally, the price is not too high for the peace of mind you'll gain, especially considering the value of your time and the frustration involved if you have to re-input important files. This smart little program is a real winner.

Bookmark is available from Intellisoft of Novato, Calif., or from local computer stores.

Hillel Segal is an independent computer consultant and author of the monthly *Executive Computing Newsletter*, published by the Association of Computer Users, P.O. Box 9003, Boulder 80301.